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Crystal Palace. Handel Festival

GRAND  
HANDEL MUSICAL FESTIVAL

AT THE  
CRYSTAL PALACE IN 1857.

A LETTER  
ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS, SUBSCRIBERS, AND ASSISTANTS OF  
THE SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.





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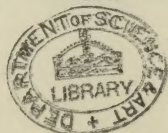
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GRAND

ANNUAL FESTIVAL

1907

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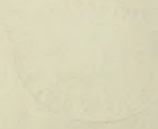
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REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STOCKHOLDERS

THE SECOND HARMONIC SOCIETY

THE FIRST REPORT AND SECOND HARMONIC

1907



TO THE

MEMBERS, SUBSCRIBERS, AND ASSISTANTS OF

THE SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The following observations are offered to you as explanatory of the course, which, on the recommendations which have been submitted to the Committee of The Sacred Harmonic Society, has been taken in reference to a grand musical celebration in commemoration of Handel.

During the period which has elapsed since the Westminster Abbey Festival of 1834, and the subsequent Amateur Festival at Exeter Hall, in the same year, the extended knowledge and practice of choral music in the Metropolis has rendered it requisite that any exhibition of Handel's genius in the present day should be of the most extensive as well as of the most efficient character.

It is especially due to you who have done so much to help on the good cause, and whose assistance will so materially aid the projected Festival, that you should be informed at the earliest opportunity of the existing intention, and of the reasons which have led to it.

In the earnest hope that the best interests of Sacred

Choral Music, and the Society with which we are associated, may be advanced by the course which has been taken, and in the anticipation that you will all experience considerable gratification therefrom,

Believe me to be,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your very obedient Servant,

ROBERT BOWLEY,

*Treasurer of The Sacred Harmonic Society.*

CHARING CROSS,  
October, 1856.



# GRAND HANDEL MUSICAL FESTIVAL

AT THE

CRYSTAL PALACE, 1857.

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THE Committee of The Sacred Harmonic Society have entered into an arrangement with the Directors of the Crystal Palace Company, for a Grand Handel Musical Festival, in the Central Transept of the Crystal Palace, in the early summer of 1857.

The unprecedented extent of the proposed orchestra on the occasion,—viz., 2300 *really efficient performers*, carefully rehearsed and placed under the most perfect arrangements,—imparts an interest to this Festival, far exceeding any former event of a similar character.

That the reasons which have prompted the Committee of The Sacred Harmonic Society to undertake the musical arrangements for this Festival, may be understood, the following explanatory statement is offered.

For some time past the Committee have had under their consideration the desirability of making proper arrangements for a grand musical congress in 1859, as the centenary of Handel's death. It is known that in other

countries public attention has been drawn to the subject, and already associations are being formed which have in view the due commemoration of Handel in 1859.

Considering what has already been accomplished with Handel's choral music in England, and the facilities now existing for an unparalleled choral exhibition in the Metropolis, it is felt that England ought not to occupy a secondary position on such an occasion. Considering also that England was Handel's country by adoption; that he resided in it for more than fifty years; that in England, and for Englishmen, and in the English language, all his great master-pieces, his Oratorios, were written; and that these great works have nowhere been so studied and performed as in England; it becomes an imperative duty, in reverence to his genius, that the Metropolis which contains the ashes of the great musician, as well as the more enduring records of his fame—the MSS. of his immortal works, should pre-eminently excel in any commemoration which may be suggested by the occasion. This should be particularly the case as regards the extent, grandeur, and perfection of its orchestral exhibition. This Festival would fail in one of its most important features, if it did not exhibit Handel's genius to assembled thousands on such a scale as would be referred to in after years as a proper standard by which his giant powers had been measured.

Fully recognising the importance of these considerations, it has been thought that a preliminary Festival held in 1857 would excite great public interest, and, as it were, preparing for the commemoration of Handel in 1859, would decide satisfactorily some important points, which otherwise would be open to future discussion.

With this view it is, that the Committee of The Sacred



Harmonic Society at this early period have taken the subject in hand; and in doing so they hope to secure a proper and effective development of the most matured plans.

The Committee are perfectly aware that in reference to a project of this character the question may be asked, Who should take it up? They trust the following will be a sufficient reply thereto.

On occasions of former Metropolitan Festivals the Directors of the Ancient Concerts have taken the initiative, and it was then right that they should have the control of such celebrations. That institution having passed away, it may be said, without in the least claiming more than is warranted by its position before the public for the past twenty years, that to The Sacred Harmonic Society belongs the succession to any post of honour connected with the name of Handel in England.

The Society has originated a series of performances of Handel's works in the Metropolis, on a scale equal to that of the Festivals of former years: it has done this with continued regularity, and with an earnest desire faithfully to develop his genius by the public representation of nearly all his sacred Oratorios as complete works. It struck out a new path by relying mainly upon them for entire performances, and the principal recompence of its Members for years of devoted labour, apart from the personal enjoyment thus resulting, has been the consciousness of leading the public mind to an acquaintance with that which must ever remain great in musical art—Handel's Sacred Oratorios.

It should be borne in mind, that at the period of the institution of the Society in 1832, London was singularly deficient in the opportunities it offered for the hearing

of choral performances. It is true the Ancient Concerts were in existence, as also the so-called Oratorios at the theatres. The former, however, were reserved for the gratification of a very small and exclusive circle; the latter had become such a mixture of ill-assorted sacred and secular selections, as to be wholly unworthy of the title of Oratorios; and both were on that small and inefficient choral scale as to excite but little public sympathy, and to afford but an imperfect realisation of the Composer's ideas.

In the original prospectus proposing the formation of The Sacred Harmonic Society, the objects of its promoters were thus described :—

“This Society has been formed in consequence of its appearing to several amateurs of music to be desirable to establish, in a central part of London, a society, whose object should be the cultivation of a just taste for the higher class of compositions in Sacred Choral Music, and the improvement of its members in execution, united with a desire to aid in establishing for the London amateurs of music the reputation, which has repeatedly been denied to them, of being able to perform the sublime compositions of the great sacred composers with that degree of precision and effect which their worth entitles them to, and which the development of their inherent beauties requires.”

It is not often that the promoters of a new association so thoroughly succeed in their aim, and realise results so much beyond their most sanguine expectations, as has happily been the case with those who may with truth be described as the “Founders” of the Sacred Harmonic Society, and who still continue to take an important part in its management.

It is admitted on every side, that the exertions of the

Society have had an immense effect in the extension of Choral Music: the following detail will probably be regarded with interest as establishing the position it has now taken up.

The Sacred Harmonic Society has in the twenty years, from June 1836 to June 1856, given in the large hall, Exeter Hall, 344 performances. It will be a moderate calculation to place the audiences attending these Concerts (exclusive of the orchestra, stewards, &c., which may be taken at 700 more for each concert) at 650,000 persons.

Comparing these numbers with those of other great choral celebrations in this country, what has been effected by The Sacred Harmonic Society will be more clearly apparent. For instance, it has been gathered from the published returns of tickets sold, from the plans of seats, and from other sources of information, that the attendances at the various Musical Festivals following, have been,—

|                            |                      |             |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| 6 Westminster Abbey . . .  | 1784 to 1791 . . .   | 60,000      |
| 1 ditto . . . . .          | 1834 . . .           | 20,000      |
| 4 York Minster . . . . .   | 1823 to 1835 . . .   | 90,000      |
| 4 Edinburgh . . . . .      | 1813 to 1843 . . .   | 32,000      |
| 11 Norwich . . . . .       | 1824 to 1854 . . .   | 88,000      |
| 17 Birmingham . . . . .    | 1769 to 1829 } . . . | 180,000     |
| 8 ditto in Town Hall . . . | 1834 to 1855 } . . . |             |
| 4 Chester . . . . .        | 1806 to 1829 } . . . |             |
| 7 Derby . . . . .          | 1810 to 1831 } . . . |             |
| 1 Dublin . . . . .         | 1831 } . . .         |             |
| 8 Liverpool . . . . .      | 1813 to 1849 } . . . | say 160,000 |
| 2 Manchester . . . . .     | 1828 & 1836 } . . .  |             |
| 2 Bradford . . . . .       | 1853 & 1856 } . . .  |             |
| Total . . . . .            |                      | 650,000     |

It thus appears that the attendances during seventy-two years at these Festivals, which, with one important exception, comprise all the great music meetings of this country, have



been exceeded by the numbers present at the Concerts of The Sacred Harmonic Society during twenty years only.

The exception alluded to will be recognised as the meetings of the "Three Choirs of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford," which, commencing in 1724, have continued uninterruptedly to the present time. No record exists of the various audiences at these meetings, except for some of those of comparatively recent date; but from *Lysons'* account and other sources of information, it is evident that the earlier meetings were but of small account.

It will certainly be a liberal estimate to allot to each of the 132 Three Choir Festivals an audience of 2800 persons, or say in all, for the sake of round numbers, 370,000; if this is added to the 630,000 attendances at other Festivals, it will be seen that a total of 1,000,000 persons may be reckoned, with a near approximation to correctness, as the entire numbers present on all these occasions. In stating these numbers, however, it should be borne in mind that they include evening secular concerts and balls, as well as Cathedral services at which anthems only are performed. These it is within the mark to assume amounted to considerably more than one-third of the estimated number of 1,000,000. Placing the deduction, however, at only 350,000, the startling fact will be apparent, that The Sacred Harmonic Society's performances in Exeter Hall, within the past twenty years, have been attended by as many persons as all the Sacred Oratorio performances of the *whole* of the great Musical Festivals above mentioned.

How much does a fact like this throw light upon the extended knowledge and practice of Choral Music in the present day! London, which, but five-and-twenty years ago, afforded but little opportunity for choral practice, and was

in this respect behind many a village in Lancashire or Yorkshire, now takes the lead in choral performances, and is followed by every part of the country. Sacred Harmonic Societies abound; not in England alone, but in all parts where music is known Societies under this name exist, and help in extending the circle of musical knowledge. This increased practice of Choral Music has led to great attention being paid by the press generally to musical subjects: the cheap musical publications of the present day, which have sprung up with the growth of the Choral Societies, have also exercised great influence; while the facility of railway transit renders opportunities available to large numbers of persons for enjoying the great Choral Exhibitions which so frequently take place in the Metropolis and elsewhere.

If the influence which The Sacred Harmonic Society has had in promoting the present advanced state of musical knowledge may be quoted as a reason why it should take the lead in a Handel Commemoration, still more is that position strengthened when closer attention is drawn to the frequency with which it has kept the great works of Handel prominently before the public.

It appears from the records of the Society, that of its 344 performances at Exeter Hall, exactly one half, or 172, have consisted of entire Oratorios of Handel.

In the list is comprised:—

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Messiah,         | Saul,       |
| Israel in Egypt, | Jephtha,    |
| Judas Maccabæus, | Deborah,    |
| Samson,          | Athaliah,   |
| Solomon,         | Belshazzar. |
| Joshua,          |             |

Besides these 172 performances, other pieces by Handel have been introduced frequently at the performances of

the Society; such as Te Deums, the Jubilate, Anthems, and occasional detached solos and choruses, forming no part of the above-mentioned Oratorios.

It has been stated to have been the aim of the Society, as far as possible, to produce Handel's Oratorios entire; and there is no doubt this has been a wise course, as the audiences have become more interested in the progress of the work, and have better understood the design of the Composer, than when an unconnected selection has been presented to their notice.

Although the Commemoration Festival of 1784 had considerable influence in the promotion of Choral Music at the time, yet it is to be feared, that from its comprising so much "selected" music, it had a bad effect upon the performances of Oratorios as entire works. That it caused selections to be performed in place of works complete in themselves, is evident from the books of words used at the music meetings about that period. In those of the "Three Choirs," for instance, mention is made of the performances comprising the "Westminster Abbey Music."

The remark will, perhaps, excite astonishment, but it is not the less true, that for nearly half a century prior to the establishment of the Society in 1832, scarcely an instance can be found of the public performance, in anything like completeness, of any of the Oratorios of Handel, except the Messiah.

It thus may again be argued, that The Sacred Harmonic Society deserves well of the admirers of Handel, from the manner in which his Oratorios as *complete works* have been presented to the public.

There are other points deserving special notice in connection with this part of the subject, among which, one of the most important is, the necessary association of



musical amateurs with the proposed Festival. If it were not so, the increased cost of an undertaking upon such an extensive scale would militate seriously against its success. But, apart from this, it is not possible that adequate professional assistance, accustomed to the duties to be undertaken, *could be* provided ; so that the employment of a large number of musical amateurs, *i. e.*, those who do not follow music as a profession, *must be* resorted to.

Here the amateur connection and position of the Society will be of great value. Its purely amateur membership and management precluding individual emolument, and the strict devotion of its funds to the advancement of the Musical Art, evinced both in the formation of its well-appointed Musical Library—a Library of Music and Musical Literature, for extent and variety second to none in the Metropolis, comprising, as it does, music of every class, both sacred and secular, and containing both printed and manuscript compositions of the rarest kind—and in its public performances, have secured a position to The Sacred Harmonic Society of which the amateurs may justly be proud, and which stands in strong contrast with many a self-interested scheme, put forward under the pretence of effecting a public good. It is but too common in the present day for amateur assistance to be sought in aid of all kinds of musical speculations ; in truth, it has become the practice of parties to turn it to a regular source of employment, and, trading upon the readiness of amateurs to join in musical performances, to hire them out at a given sum. Such a practice is not reputable, and should meet with the strongest reprobation.

Amateurs will do well to pause before they lend themselves to schemes of this character ; they should bear in mind that, however much The Sacred Harmonic Society

and other similarly constituted associations may do to elevate the artistic position of musical amateurs, if they permit themselves to be made the tools of self-interested schemers, they degrade the high position which, with no small labour, has been acquired for them. It is only giving expression to a caution, which recent and present circumstances point out to be absolutely necessary, to advise musical amateurs to refuse assistance to any mere speculation, or in any case where amateur control and management are not recognised, and the general advancement of the Musical Art, as well as the welfare of its professors, kept in view.

Another reason of no small importance may be still brought forward as an additional argument, and that is, the advantages The Sacred Harmonic Society possesses for the conduct of a large Musical Festival, in the matured organisation of the Society, with its system of superintendents skilled in their duties, and with a widely-extended knowledge of the capabilities of the Metropolitan performers, as well as of those in many localities in the country. It was this prepared state which enabled the Society to carry out to such perfection the then unprecedented display of 1700 performers, at the opening of the Crystal Palace in June, 1854; although circumstances permitted of only ten clear days for completing the entire arrangements. What was then effected in this short space of time, will be a guarantee for what may be accomplished under more favourable circumstances.

These combined circumstances, it is thought, conclusively prove, that it is peculiarly the privilege of The Sacred Harmonic Society to take the lead in any grand Metropolitan commemoration of Handel.

Having thus disposed of that part of the subject which

regards the reasons why The Sacred Harmonic Society should take the lead in a Handel Festival, it follows that the nature of the proposed Festival itself should be considered.

To those who have given careful attention to the subject, it must be tolerably apparent, that to attempt a Metropolitan Festival on a scale of Orchestra, such as is witnessed at the concerts of The Sacred Harmonic Society, or at the country Festivals, as at present constituted, would fail to enlist the attention desirable on such an occasion.

A Festival in London in the present day must produce the broadest and grandest effects, to enable it successfully to compete with what may be termed every-day occurrences.

Handel's Music fortunately permits of the employment of almost unlimited additional force with increased effect and grandeur; and it thus becomes apparent, that among the many points which arise requiring due consideration prior to adopting a specific plan of operations for a Metropolitan Commemoration, there are two of paramount importance, viz. :—the *locale* in which the Festival shall be held, and the numerical strength to which it is desirable the Orchestra shall extend. As the first of these questions governs the second, it claims prior notice.

It may be said in few words as the result of lengthened observation and consideration, and with full knowledge of the capabilities of Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, Westminster Hall, Exeter Hall, St. George's Hall, Liverpool, and the Town Hall, Birmingham, that none of these, nor any other building of this class either erected or in course of erection, is sufficiently capacious or adapted for the purposes of the proposed celebration. And further,



that the only present exception is the GREAT CENTRAL TRANSEPT of the CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM.

It will assist in the clear understanding of this question, to enter a little into the capabilities of the cathedrals and other places at which Music Meetings have been held.

Notwithstanding the advantages the cathedrals possess as regards height and resonance for great Musical Festivals, their inconveniences are very great, particularly with large Orchestras. It will doubtless cause surprise when it is stated that the nave of Westminster Abbey, in which the Commemoration of 1784 and the Festival of 1834 were held, has a clear space of 33 feet 6 inches only (or less than the width of the Hanover Square Room), and that the entire width of the nave and aisles is but 74 feet (3 feet less than Exeter Hall), while of this more than 24 feet is occupied by the central and side pillars.

It is somewhat difficult to reconcile the statements of the musical success of the 1784 Commemoration with the experience and knowledge of the present day. At this meeting the principal vocalists were 15 feet *in front* of the conductor; the leader (of the time) being removed 20 feet from them. That the Orchestra could have gone with the force and precision we are now accustomed to, is absolutely impossible, particularly bearing in mind that all the treble chorus were placed in front with their backs to the conductor and leader, the other voices being ranged on either side, the heads of the upper rows of chorus singers nearly touching the arched roof of the side aisles. It is impossible under such circumstances that the sound could have come out clearly, and the effect upon the ears of the audience must have been confused. The number of performers at Westminster Abbey in 1784 was 527, in 1834

on the Messiah day, 599 ; on neither of those occasions did the audience amount to 3000, although the avenues were filled with persons standing. The nave was fitted up as numbered seats, issued at two guineas each. The narrowness of the building will be apparent when it is stated, that each row of seats extending across the nave, held but 16 persons. It is therefore evident that a really great Commemoration of Handel adapted to present circumstances is not practicable within the walls of the sacred edifice in which the ashes of the great musician repose. Although there are touching associations connected with the idea of a series of performances of Handel's works in Westminster Abbey, yet these give place before the advantages which must result from the grander and more effective performance of these masterpieces in a building possessing greater capabilities for Orchestra as well as for Audience.

Although not of a metropolitan character, a remark on the York Festivals may not be uninteresting, as they were decidedly the greatest of the Cathedral musical gatherings. York Minster afforded immense audience accommodation, having seats provided for 5200 persons, while the Orchestra being placed at the intersection of the nave and transepts, the objections which arose from the extension of the chorus singers into the side aisles as at Westminster Abbey, did not exist. York Minster, however, although 107 feet wide, gave an open front to the Orchestra of only 38 feet, or but 4 feet 6 inches more than the Abbey. This confined space was bounded on either side by the great pillars supporting the central tower, which are 20 feet in diameter. Besides this, the tower being 170 feet high, open to the top, with the transepts breaking off at each side, the situation must have been extremely ill calculated for musical effect ; as may fairly be inferred from the accounts of the time,

which, in spite of evidently favourable predilections, speak of the performances as wavering and indistinct. How much more so would it be regarded in the present day, since the experience gained by choral celebrations in large open unobstructed halls.

It should not be overlooked that conscientious objections are not unfrequently urged against the use of cathedrals or churches for the purposes of Musical Festivals. Without for a moment admitting that the performance of Sacred Music, as is customary at the Cathedral Festivals, can be otherwise than generally conducive to the most elevating associations, yet still the fact, that in some quarters these scruples do exist, should not be entirely unheeded. One of the principal reasons for the use of the cathedrals for Musical Festivals has been the large relative amount of accommodation they offer, but it is evidently better to avoid, where possible, running counter to feelings which are easily roused into opposition.

Having thus noticed some of the points connected with the use of cathedrals for Festivals, in order that a comparison may be made of the relative extent of various buildings in London available as Music Halls, the respective dimensions of such buildings on the ground or base-floor, with the number of square feet comprised therein, is given as follows:—

|   | <i>Wide. Long. Square feet.</i> |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Hanover Square Rooms . . . . .                                  | 35 × 108 = 3780                 |
| Freemasons' Hall . . . . .                                      | 43 × 92 = 3956                  |
| St. Martin's Hall . . . . .                                     | 55 × 120 = 6600                 |
| St. James's Hall (suggested) . . . . .                          | 60 × 134 = 8040                 |
| Surrey Gardens Hall, deducting corners . . . . .                | 66 × 155 = 9300                 |
| Exeter Hall . . . . .   | 77 × 131 = 10,087               |
| Crystal Palace, Central Transept (available<br>space) . . . . . | } 168 × 360 = 60,480            |
|   |                                 |



This Table will doubtless be not a little startling to those accustomed to hear statements of the thousands whom it is the interest of parties to describe as attending places of public resort. It may be taken as a rule that, allowing for avenues, each person to sit comfortably should be reckoned to require a space of not less than five square feet: it is therefore easy to calculate the number of persons the preceding buildings will accommodate. As a matter of course, any gallery accommodation must be added, but this, except on a low level, is only available at one end, or for single rows of persons at the sides, while under any circumstances the convenience and comfort of the occupants of the floor under the galleries is materially lessened.

It is an important consideration in connection with proper audience accommodation and the well-going of music, that ample clear space on the ground-floor, not covered by galleries, should be provided: the following Table is therefore appended, showing the length and width, as well as the square feet comprised therein, of those portions of the ground space open to the roof, of the following buildings:—

|  | <i>Wide.</i> | <i>Long.</i> | <i>Square feet.</i> |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Hanover Square . . . . .                   | 35           | × 96 =       | 3360                |
| Surrey Gardens Hall . . . . .              | 35           | × 107 =      | 3745                |
| Freemasons' Hall . . . . .                 | 43           | × 92 =       | 3956                |
| Proposed St. James's Hall . . . . .        |              | (doubtful)   |                     |
| St. Martin's Hall . . . . .                | 41           | × 105 =      | 4305                |
| Exeter Hall . . . . .                      | 77           | × 116 =      | 8982                |
| Crystal Palace, Central Transept . . . . . | 120          | × 312 =      | 37,440              |

It will thus be seen that the Central Transept of the Crystal Palace has accommodation far beyond any building now available.

It is not only in its great width of 120 feet clear, (with 48

feet more on each side if it should be thought advisable to make use of any portion of it,) that these advantages consist, but also in its immense capabilities for an unusually numerous audience. Calculations which have been entered into demonstrate that, in addition to the performers, from 10,000 to 12,000 persons may be easily and comfortably seated in the Central Transept, with an uninterrupted view of the Orchestra for each individual.

Its great height also, 168 feet to the crown of the arch, affords ample space for the full development of the powers of the great musical force it is proposed to assemble.

It has not escaped the attention of the promoters of the present Festival, that some objections may be urged to the use of the Crystal Palace, on account of its distance from London. Feeling assured that no building existed in the Metropolis of sufficient capacity, it was suggested specially to erect a temporary building for the occasion; there is little doubt but that encouragement and assistance of the highest character might have been enlisted in aid of such a project, had it been put forward under proper auspices. It would however have involved an expenditure of at least £30,000, to erect, even thus temporarily, a safe building of sufficient height and clear width to accomplish the object sought to be attained. It would also have been impossible to secure a site for the purpose in a central part of the Metropolis. These and other considerations, which have been very carefully weighed, led to the conclusion, that it would be extremely unwise to attempt the erection of a special building, *if the Crystal Palace could be made available under proper arrangements*; and the readiness with which the Crystal Palace Directors recognised the importance of the con-

clusion arrived at, and the willingness with which they have met the question, and entered into arrangements for a Festival in 1857, which may be made a test of the capabilities of their magnificent edifice, demands the warmest commendation.

Having thus fortunately a building of unexampled capability placed at disposal, the next point to be considered is the extent of the Orchestra to be assembled.

It has already been stated, that under proper arrangements, Handel's Choral Music is capable of having an almost unlimited number of performers employed upon it, with proportionately increased grandeur and effect.

By the use of the word "performers" it is intended to convey the distinct and positive understanding, that only really effective and well rehearsed choralists and instrumentalists will be employed. No one will admit, with more readiness than the present writer, that numbers, without individual efficiency, are worse than useless. In any celebration of this character, each person composing the orchestra *must* be completely qualified and duly prepared for the work undertaken.

In this spirit, therefore, it is intended that the orchestra shall consist of 2000 chorus singers, being 500 to each of the four vocal parts; that the band shall comprise within its ranks about 300 performers, in the following proportions: viz. 112 violins, 36 each of violas, violoncellos and double basses, and quadruple wind-instruments, thus forming, with principal singers, an entire orchestra of 2300 performers, with the most powerful organ that can be built for the occasion.

As regards the chorus, it is not expected that all its members can be most effectively selected from the Metropolis, therefore the precedent of the Society's proceedings



at the opening of the Crystal Palace will be followed, and the services of choristers accepted from the leading provincial towns. Any assistance, however, thus rendered, must be previously carefully tested, that it may be ascertained to be of an effective character, and due provision must be made for proper rehearsal.

An appropriate rising orchestra will have to be erected; the plans adopted at the opening of the Crystal Palace in 1854, with extensions, and some little modification of arrangements, may be followed on the present occasion. Arrangements, unnecessary to detail here, will also have to be carried out to develop the acoustic properties of the building, and to confine the tone produced within proper bounds.

This is not the time to enter into anticipations of the stupendous effect of such an array of musical ability as has been here outlined when applied to the great master-pieces of Handel. Who, however, with the remembrance of sensations experienced from the performance by the great orchestras of the present time of such choruses as "Worthy is the Lamb," and "Hallelujah," or "He trusted in God," of the Messiah; the "Hailstone," the "Horse and his Rider," or the "Thick Darkness," choruses of Israel in Egypt; the "Fallen is the Foe," the "Hear us, O God," "O Father;" or the "We worship God," with its Hallelujah, of "Judas Maccabæus," will do otherwise than look forward with the warmest interest to the performance of these master-works on the stupendous and unprecedented scale now contemplated.

HANDEL IN HIS GIANT MAJESTY will have a worthy offering paid to his genius; and musical England have reason to be proud of her thousands of native born

children, thus uniting to render homage to the memory of one of the greatest of her adopted sons.\*

It may not be out of place here to remark that the impressions produced by the music at the opening of the Crystal Palace in 1854 will operate most favourably on the expectations of this Festival. Confined as the selection necessarily then was to a few short pieces incidental to a state solemnity, enough was exhibited to justify the highest expectations in the coming celebration. The warm eulogiums bestowed on the music at the Crystal Palace Opening by all who had the good fortune to be present, have probably not yet been forgotten. Not only were they echoed by the unanimous voice of the press, but gracefully acknowledged in the most distinguished quarter; Lord Palmerston's official letter intimating Her Majesty's approbation of the proceedings, in these most gratifying terms:—"The Queen has been pleased to express the especial gratification she derived from the very magnificent music which was performed, and has graciously signified her opinion that it had the finest effect which Her Majesty had ever heard." When it is borne in mind how much the Orchestra will now be increased, how much more time and opportunity will be afforded for still more perfect arrangements, and how much more varied and interesting the selection of music will be, it is to be hoped and expected that, warm as those tributes of praise were, no less fervent expressions of feeling await the Festival of 1857.

One point to which particular attention will be paid in the proposed Festival, is the regularity and exactness of the

\* Handel became a naturalised British subject in 1726, a private act of Parliament having been passed in that year with this title: "An Act for naturalising Louis Sekehaye, George Frederick Handel, and others."

orchestral arrangements. It is too often to be deplored, that, in musical celebrations of unusual extent, more particularly abroad, such a want of system prevails as regards the proportionate numbers of each department, as well as such an absence of due supervision and control, and in exactly defining the position to be occupied by each individual, as tends to serious confusion leading to the most vexatious results. This and an ample supply of well-appointed music, with uniform marks of expression, are most important elements in the success of any great musical celebration.

Fully alive to the importance of these points, it is intended that copies of the works to be performed shall be carefully prepared for the occasion, and that lists of the performers being made out beforehand, each individual shall have a specified position allotted, and no departure from it be permitted under any circumstances. The Society's staff of superintendents are well acquainted with the duties devolving upon their office, and they will see that regularity is observed, and efficient supervision maintained. Without this, however excellent the performers individually may be, no perfect *ensemble* can be maintained.

Having thus, it is hoped, sufficiently explained the views which have induced the Committee of The Sacred Harmonic Society to take the lead in a Great Choral Metropolitan Handel Celebration, it is right to remark, that they will be additionally encouraged to the successful prosecution of the task they have undertaken by the co-operation of their esteemed conductor, Mr. Costa.

From lengthened experience of his peculiar ability for the conductorship of a large musical body ; from his knowledge and perfect appreciation of the great works of Handel ; from the business-like arrangements, and the energy and deter-



mination he throws into everything with which he is associated ; and from the high estimation in which he is personally held ; it is affirmed, without fear of contradiction, that the conductorship of a great Metropolitan Musical Festival cannot be placed in better hands than those of Mr. Costa. His acceptance of the conductorship of the 1857 Festival, will be a guarantee of the highest excellence which can possibly be attained.

It may be as well to state here, that, having regard to the special objects of the Festival of 1857, it is not thought expedient to undertake the performance of other than the most popular of Handel's works, and those which will best test the capabilities of the enormous Orchestra it is intended to assemble.

It is a subject reserved entirely for future consideration, whether, in 1859, means may not be adopted to bring forward some of the less known works of Handel : many points of interest present themselves in reference thereto, but it would be premature to enter upon them now. It remains, therefore, only to be stated, that at this Festival, which will take place about May next, the performances will probably consist of the three following Oratorios of Handel, viz. :—  
MESSIAH, ISRAEL IN EGYPT, and JUDAS MACCABÆUS, and that they will occur on three alternate mornings.

Without being pledged to a decided course at present, it is also probable that the following arrangements will be carried out, viz. :—

|                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Full rehearsal     | . | . | . | . | . | . | Saturday morning. |
| First performance  | . | . | . | . | . | . | Monday „          |
| Second performance | . | . | . | . | . | . | Wednesday „       |
| Third performance  | . | . | . | . | . | . | Friday „          |

It is not thought requisite to enter at present into further particulars, which will be announced in due course.

Although the Committee of the Society have undertaken this Festival, it is not intended that it shall in the least detract from, or interfere with, the ordinary operations of the Society. On the contrary, it is confidently expected that the one will derive support from the other.

The rehearsals of the Society, possessing an unusual interest, will afford the opportunity of searching for, and materially aid in training up, a greatly enlarged and efficient Metropolitan chorus; and thus the Society will receive an acquisition of strength and interest of no small importance.

The Concerts of the Society will be continued as usual; and, although more attention than customary may be paid to the works of Handel, yet it is not contemplated to lessen the attractions of the coming season, by the neglect of those works of other composers which have been usually presented by the Society to public notice.

Advantages will also doubtless offer to the Subscribers and others connected with the Society in the Festival, the arrangements for which will be pointed out at the proper time.

It only remains in conclusion to add, that the Committee appointed to carry out the arrangements for the 1857 Festival, are now prepared to receive offers of Metropolitan Amateur assistance from those disposed to cooperate in this great celebration. It is desired, however, that it may be most particularly noticed, that under no circumstances will any such offers of assistance be accepted, unless it is previously clearly ascertained that the aid thus proffered is of the most efficient character; and that those proffering it will pledge themselves to attend such rehearsals, and abide by such regulations as may be arranged.

The Committee will also be glad to receive information in respect of provincial choral assistance; and, although

they cannot undertake to accept assistance from societies or choirs as entire bodies, the applications from individuals composing those bodies, if duly vouched by their appointed officers, shall receive their best consideration.

All communications in reference to this, or any other musical subject in connection with the Festival, are requested to be addressed to the Handel Festival Committee, at the Office of The Sacred Harmonic Society, No. 6, Exeter Hall.

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*Newspapers or periodicals extracting from this Pamphlet, or noticing the Festival, will oblige by forwarding a copy of the publication to the Handel Festival Committee, at the Offices of The Sacred Harmonic Society, 6, Exeter Hall, London, when "slips" of future proceedings of public interest relating thereto will be sent from time to time.*





Charming Cross  
17 July 1857

My Dear Sir,

It has just occurred  
to me that the enclosure might  
be useful as data for audience  
space. The block plan was  
laid out in squares of 48  
feet for 400 persons. This gave  
about  $5\frac{3}{4}$  to each but it  
was thought advisable to en

on the safe side as the tickets  
were all sold as numbered  
stalls & the avenues left  
wide.

The chaise seats (on the  
other plan) were much closer.

In case you should not have  
it I send you a little  
pamphlet I issued before  
the Festival: at page 18  
you will find a few dimensions.



of music rooms given. -

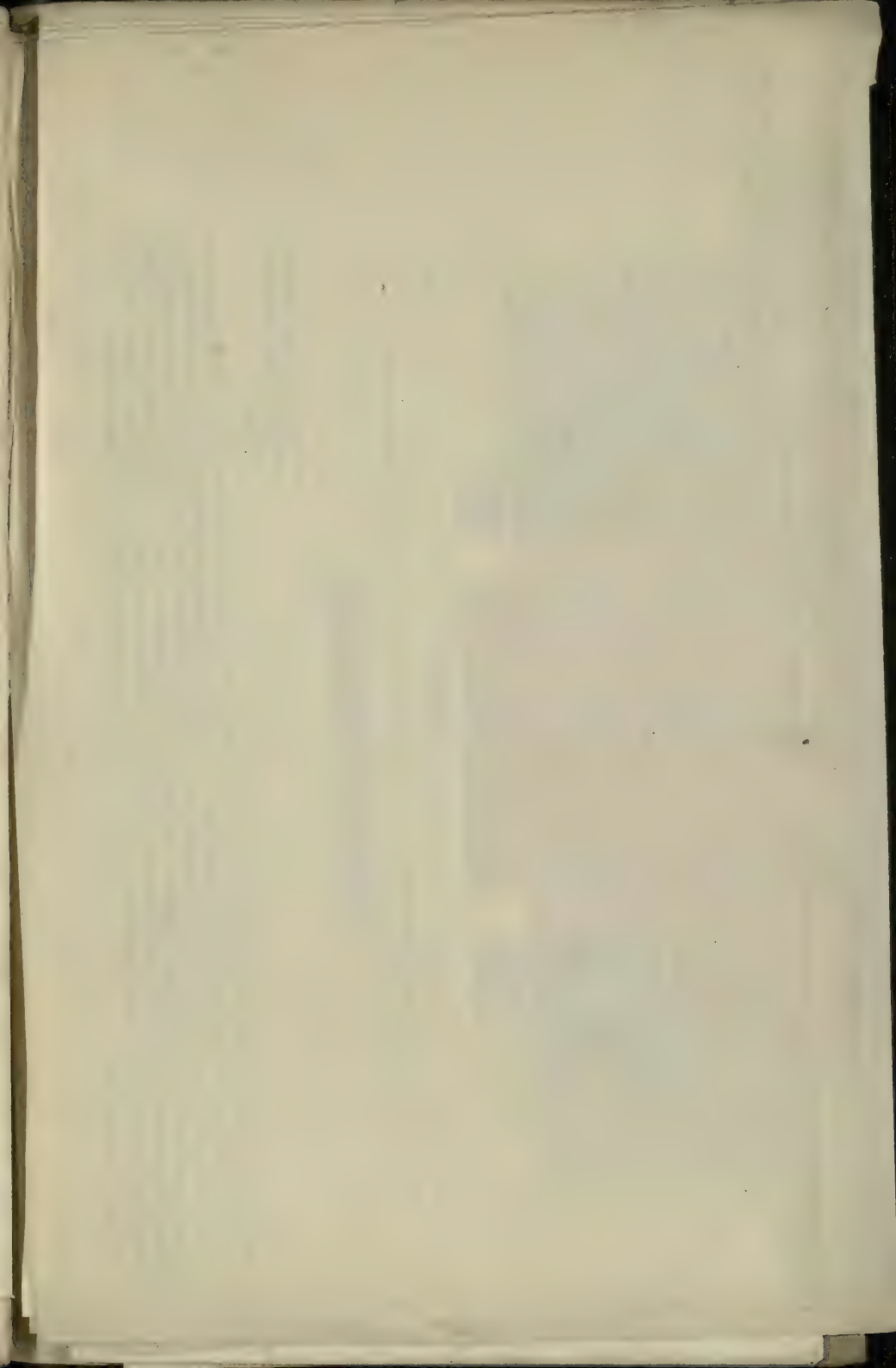
Upon referring to some plans  
I have I find at St Georges Hall  
Liverpool only  $19\frac{1}{5}$  inches  
in width (and about 30  
inches in depth to each stall:  
this however is without aisles.

At Bingham Town Hall  
it is still less but it has  
always appeared to me to  
be cramped there. I can

only assure you most heartily  
that if I can give any hints  
or aid it shall be Delighted.

I am My D<sup>r</sup> Sir  
- Respectfully yours  
Robt Parley

Wm Cde G  
C.B.



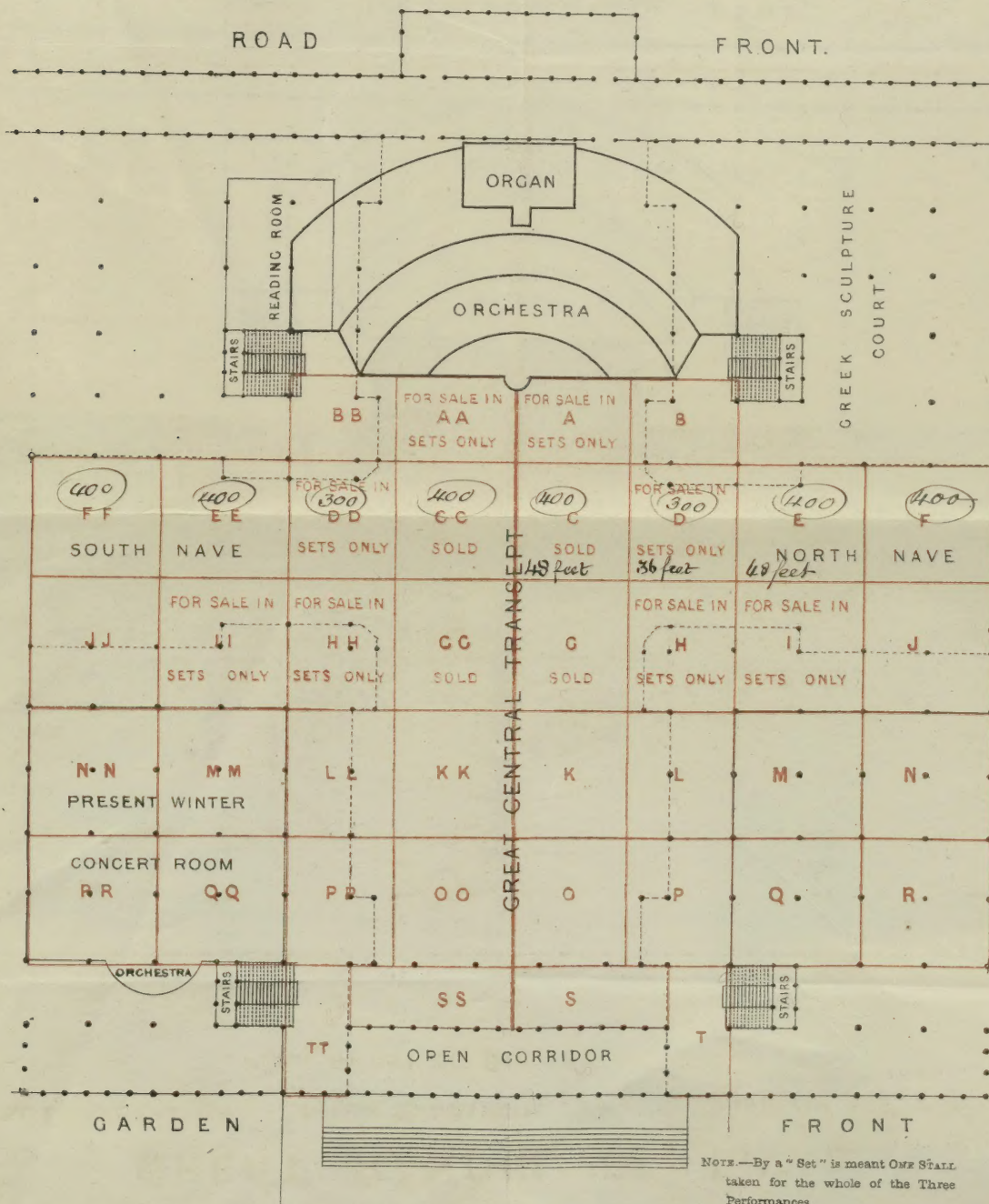


# Crystal Palace.

## GREAT HANDEL FESTIVAL.

MESSIAH, June 15, 1857. JUDAS MACCABEUS, June 17. ISRAEL IN EGYPT, June 19.

### PLAN SHOWING BLOCKS OF SEATS.



*The figures refer to the number of persons seated in each block. The allowance was quite ample.*

ENTRANCE to the PALACE can only be obtained by the NORTH and SOUTH TRANSEPTS, or by the RAILWAY STATION. At each of these places precise directions and guides will be found, showing the route to be taken for reaching each Block of Seats without difficulty.

Each Ticket will be numbered on the front and lettered on the back, and the Seats within each Block will have Numbers corresponding with the Tickets issued. No plan of these Numbers can be made up, or any information given in respect of them, beyond the positive assurance that consecutive numbers will be in close proximity to each other. Upon the arrival of the several holders of Tickets within each separate Block, Stewards will be found in attendance to conduct persons to the numbers indicated on their respective Tickets.

MONDAY, 13th April, 1857.

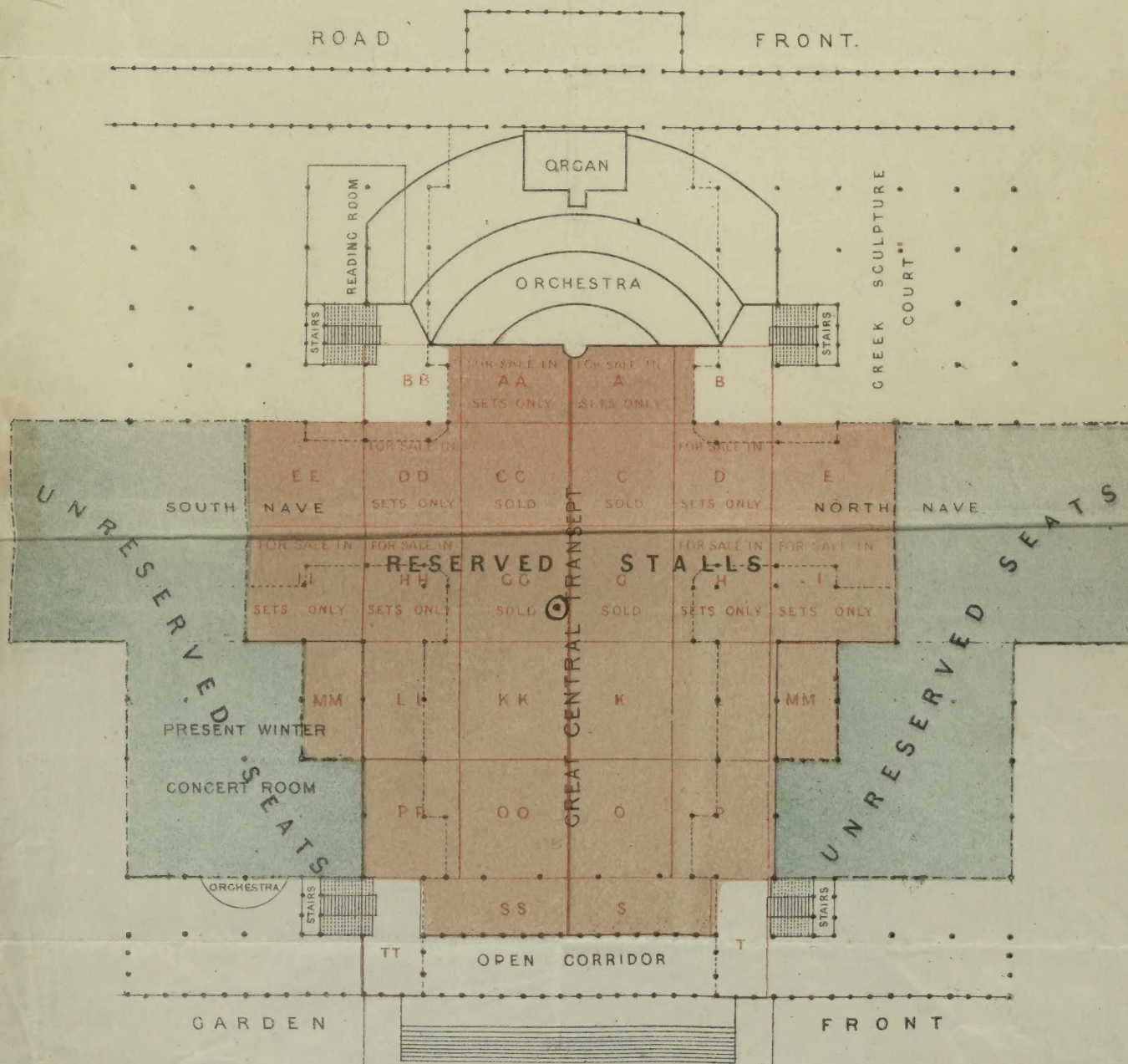


# Crystal Palace.

## GREAT HANDEL FESTIVAL.

MESSIAH, June 15, 1857. JUDAS MACCABEUS, June 17. ISRAEL IN EGYPT, June 19.

### PLAN SHOWING BLOCKS OF SEATS.



NOTE.—By a "Set" is meant ONE STALL taken for the whole of the Three Performances.

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MONDAY, 13th April, 1857.

Day & Son, Ltd. to the Queen.



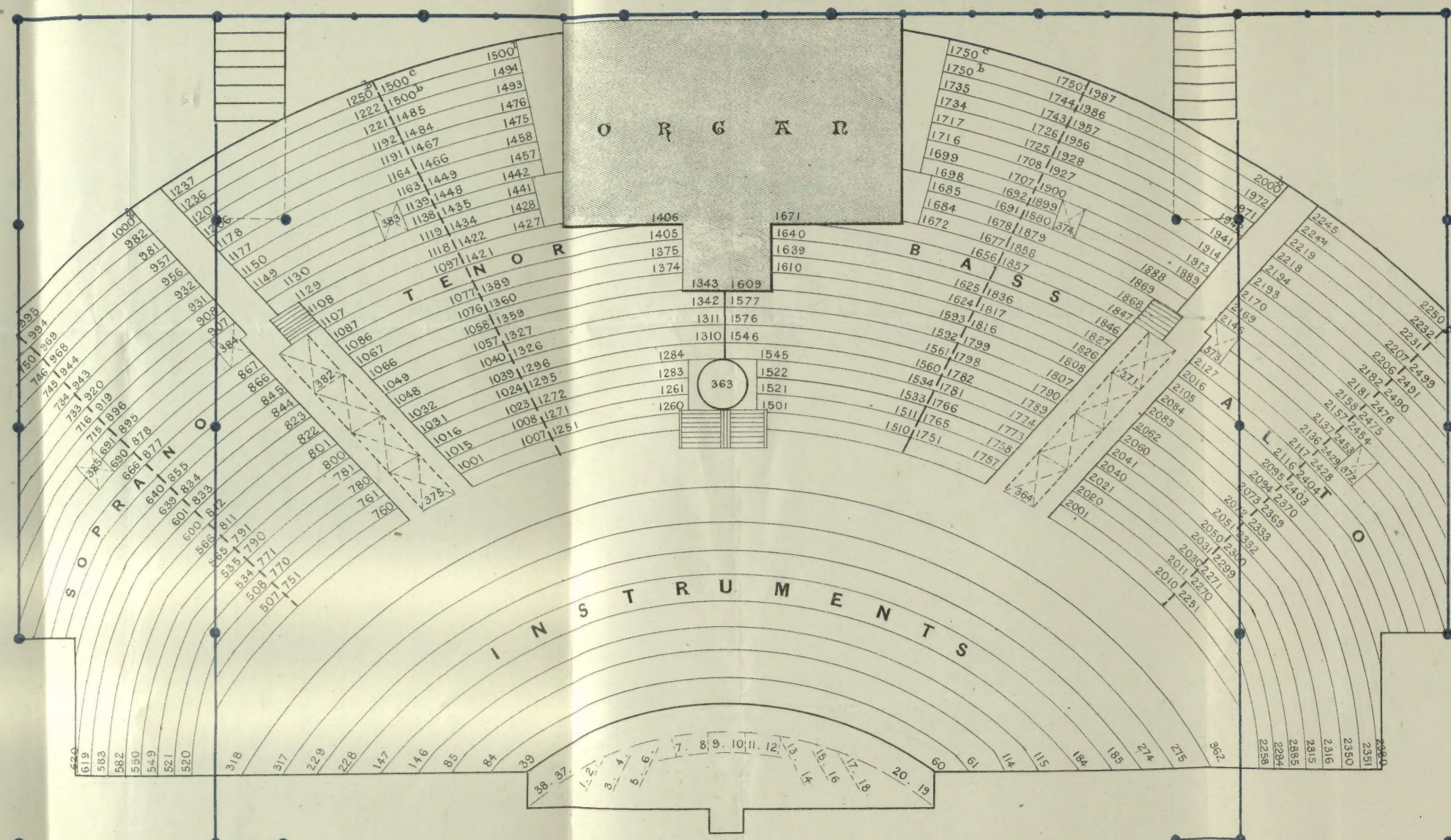
# CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

PLAN of ORCHESTRA  
AT THE

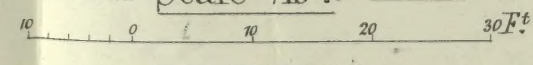
## CRYSTAL PALACE

June 1857.

Conductor M<sup>r</sup> Costa.



Scale  $\frac{1}{16}$ th







**SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY,**  
**EXETER HALL.**

**CONDUCTOR, MR. COSTA.**

**TWENTY-FIFTH SEASON, 1856-7.**

THE Committee have the pleasure to announce that the Concert Season will commence with **HANDEL'S ORATORIO SOLOMON**, on **FRIDAY, the 28th November instant.**

A desire having been expressed by Subscribers to be informed of the dates upon which Subscription Concerts will take place, the following are suggested as being likely to be those fixed upon:—

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| FRIDAY, 28 NOVEMBER. | FRIDAY, 27 FEBRUARY. |
| " 12 DECEMBER.       | " 13 MARCH.          |
| " 9 JANUARY.         | " 27 "               |
| " 23 "               | WEDNESDAY, 8 APRIL.  |
| " 13 FEBRUARY.       | FRIDAY, 17 "         |

During this period the Committee hope to perform Four (if not Five) of **HANDEL'S ORATORIOS, ELIJAH, CREATION, ELI, LOEGESANG, MOZART'S REQUIEM, ATHALIE**, and an adaptation of **ROSSINI'S STABAT MATER.**

The Committee are particularly anxious to call attention to the Oratorios of Handel, during the coming Season—a course which they conceive will be acceptable to the Subscribers, from the interest which will be excited by the Great Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in the early Summer of the coming year, in connection with which the Committee anticipate being able to make announcements of interest to the Subscribers as the arrangements proceed.

The Subscription to the Society is, for—

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| CENTRAL AREA RESERVED STALLS . . . . .     | Three Guineas. |
| RESERVED SEATS, AREA AND GALLERY . . . . . | Two Guineas.   |
| UNRESERVED SEATS . . . . .                 | One Guinea.    |

Attendance for the receipt of Subscriptions is given at the Society's Office daily, from 10 till 5 o'clock; or during the Rehearsals on Friday evenings, from 8 till 10 o'clock.

THOS. BREWER,

6, EXETER HALL,  
10 Nov., 1856.

*Hon. Sec.*